If I may, I just want to make a couple of statements before I go on. The first one is I am an advisor to Mexico’s President, but whatever I say, is my personal opinion, and that is the way I want you to register it.

As a way to start, we can check the first page of today’s paper. I don’t know if you noticed that, but it’s pretty much the same page that we have almost every other day in the last three years. It says the main mafia, the main cartel, chief has been killed and the border is in flames. By the way, the picture is not at the border. It is in Michoacan, a south/central Mexican state.

But that is the picture — it’s actually in flames. The point is if you go ahead and check this paper today and say is that bad news or good news, you go through all the news today, there are many results in Michoacan as well as in Tamaulipas, I mean the border, which actually had this confrontation for over six hours with a big cartel chief in Tamaulipas, and there were two marines killed and over six criminals killed in a six hours shooting. That’s the picture in all the world’s papers today to describe the situation with the border.

Well, yes, we see it’s kind of uncommon I think for a meeting like this, to spend lunchtime talking about violence, nevertheless, and getting forward in this topic, let’s talk about some statistics.

If we go at the rate that we are facing these days, at the end of this administration, we could estimate that we will have over 60,000 homicides directly linked to organized crime and drugs. That’s the size of the problem. Now, we do have to make some distinctions, so we have a better idea of what is going on down here, because it is true that we pass in the national standards in this killing index, I think. Even if we lack some official information, the bodies are out there.

We are passing, from the beginning of the administration, to a rate of 6.7 people killed per every 100,000 people, from 6.7 to almost 14 in this year. That’s the rate. You have to compare that with other countries. Colombia, for example, is in very good shape, and it got through it and this year’s statistics are 55 homicides per every 100,000. It went up for over 200. Ciudad Juarez is the worst, the hottest spot in Mexico and it’s around 100; pretty bad. And we’ll explain it when we get to the Juarez case, because there is something interesting about Juarez and what is going on there at the border.

But just to figure out the size of the problem, let me say something else. Almost 80 percent of this situation is held within five different states out of 32 states in the Mexican territory. If we have a look at a note in today’s paper, almost 50 percent of the killings are made in three states, and those are: Chihuahua, of course, the head of the list, then Baja California and then Sinaloa. And if we move to the south we see Campeche and Yucatan, with an rate pretty close to the Europeans’ index. So the concentration is, as already Jeff has stated, related to the confrontation among and between the cartels.

If we want to make a figure of what is going on down here and talking about the phenomenon, the criminal, the organized crime and what happened, it’s not just that they didn’t get to be friendly anymore. I think we have to recognize something mentioned a lot by the president himself which is the organized crime
organizations business model. They had to move from this transactional situation where they have to be in control of the rules because the whole business was just to get the drugs up into the northern markets. But nowadays they need regional control, they are actually fighting for regional control and space control, and that created a completely different situation.

You're right, Jeff, the Sinaloa cartel was pretty functional. They did business. Nobody bothered. They knew everybody was there, even in Guadalajara. Guadalajara was added, when they started being in control and fighting Sinaloa, so they moved down there. In Jalisco, they thought they would never have that problem, but when you come to think about drugs business, anyone who says that they have no problem, that area, that one will be next, the next one will be also problem, and in trouble.

The truth is that they needed physical control and regional control because they have business to do now. It's drug consumption growing up, income growing up, they have a new market that they have to satisfy among other these things, all these routes issue that already Jeff mentioned.

But we do have a new reality with more violent crime, and they do what they are doing. They are not just killing their enemy. They are creating actually real terror. And that's something we have to be aware of.

I remember talking with somebody and saying the most important problem nowadays in fighting drugs in Mexico is not corruption, and they said enlighten me, how is that so? Well, it is a fact. It's not corruption anymore because they don't need it in the first place. The most important problem nowadays is fear. People, the authority, local authorities, don't want to do their jobs, because they are afraid of it, they don't need to be paid for it.

There are terrible stories, all these beheadings and bodies hanging from bridges, all this, it's not new for different organizations, in the Talibans, in the Guatemalans' war. They actually want to make sure that the institutions are paralyzed. That's what is going on here — it's a lot of killings. Look, the public figures we have been talking about, but then we have to recognize as well that it's focused in these six states, mostly in the northern border and in Tamaulipas and Sinaloa on the Pacific Ocean. So three cities — Tijuana, Juarez and Culiacaan — will by themselves account for close to 30 percent of the killings for the last year. That is the situation.

What are we doing about it? Like Jeff said, it seems to us sometimes that what is actually the question is the government’s response to these actions. And even there are some people who have mentioned that probably the government strategy has been what has created this level of violence.

I absolutely don't agree with that. It was a matter of time. Perhaps you can talk about the strategy. You have to focus on Tamaulipas and then move to Michoacan. Well, we have news for you. The problem now is that it's not only organized crime dealing drugs. The problem is all these organizations, criminal organizations and the wide base that is involved in kidnappings and extortions, they are absolutely unmanageable. There is no way out of this. We have to face that. Let me make some figures. By the time we started working in drugs, it was back in the 80s, and it was interesting, it was kind of problematic to convince the politicians that it was actually in our security agendas, like you already mentioned.

It is true. It's not that far. I remember a special meeting back in 1986 when somebody said that drugs were not a national security problem to this country. Well, the figures are also a way to explain what happened. Colombia and Mexico together in 1980 make a total seizure of 10 tons. Ten years after that, in 1990, we both together, seized around 100 tons, and then we started being concerned about it. We started building the first federal police because we already had specialized highways police forces, federal highways patrol. That's the only federal police we had 12 years ago in this country. And we started talking
of the need to have the federal police and to have a real ability of law enforcement at a federal level. By the way, drug-related crimes are catalogued as federal in Mexico.

By the time that Zedillo’s administration came to an end, we had around 4,000 federal police officers. When the Fox administration finished, it was the same number: 4,000. That is how Mr. Calderon started his administration. Four years later, at the end of this year, the federal police counts a force of 34,000 federal police officers and we need around 150,000.

Just to give you an example, now in the Monterrey area in the northern state of Nuevo Leon, an industrial state, we have only 0.4 police officers per 1,000 citizens. We are supposed to have at least three police officers per 1,000. But those numbers work in regular situations. In Iraq, in Baghdad they have 20 police officers and law enforcement agents to control the situation when unstable. That's how far we are.

But if you see this current administration’s results, I want just to say that by the time the Chiapas problem started (1994), we seized around 20 weapons. Now in this administration, after four years we have seized 70,000 assault rifles and weapons of this kind. There is an enormous difference in the numbers we have.

Last night they brought down the kingpins of the area. In numbers, people put in jail and extradited to the United States, it has been as successful as it can be when you come to think about the kingpins and the organization of the top of the crime hierarchies. But at the low levels, it seems to us sometimes that we are out of control. What's next? Are we going to face martial law in Juarez?

Let's talk about Juarez. Juarez is one of the most difficult areas nowadays, and it is so because of the social problematic issues. But it's kind of interesting issues that some of you have already heard I mentioned — El Paso claims to be the most secure city in the States just after Honolulu. Something doesn't fit. Next to Juarez, the most complicated city in Mexico. How is it so?

I think it is part of the same thing. El Paso is one of the most secure cities in the US, because Juarez is one of the most insecure places in Mexico. Can we solve the problem? I think we are on our way to. Tijuana. I remember two years ago we went to a meeting in San Diego, and it took around eight years to change the perception of people who said we are absolutely getting better, and Tijuana is much better now eight years later. Eight years is a long cycle, a long cycle. But in Colombia it took over 20 years to get any better.

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